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Your essential daily news | MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2015 | High -3°C/Low -4°C Mix of sun and cloud

'A chance to get ahead'

Budapest's transit genius offers advice to the TTC on ways to 'prioritize' urban mobility

metroNEWS

Outreach program draws ire

PUBLIC HEALTH

Police presence won't help bid to reduce drug harm: Experts

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

A drug harm reduction program in Toronto is arousing concerns among the very community it is supposed to help.

The Street Outreach project began in October as a partnership between Toronto Public Health, the John Howard Society and the Toronto police. The program offers assistance to people dealing with substance abuse, homelessness, poverty and mental health issues.

During the six-month pilot project, plainclothes police officers have been working alongside outreach workers.

According to police Supt. Scott Baptist, the partnership allows officers to take a "proactive" approach to addiction issues.

"We've been criticized in the past for being too enforcement oriented," he said.

However, harm reduction advocates say involving police in the program sends the wrong message.

"The police is the most comprehensive tool in reinforcing prohibition and we know you comprehend the magnitude of the negative role the police play in the lives of people who use drugs," the Toronto Drug Users Union wrote in an open letter to public health officials.

Through its The Works program, Toronto Public Health offers a needle exchange programs, medical testing and a methadone clinic.

Gary James Thompson, a former homeless person and community worker in Toronto, is concerned people will be less likely to access those services because of the police presence.

"Police aren't trained to deal with the people on the streets. They traumatize them, right?" he said.

If drug users shun things like needle exchanges, the result could be an increase in illnesses like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, as well as potential drug overdoses, the Toronto Harm Reduction Alliance said in a statement.

Both the alliance and the Drug Users Union have called for an end to the partnership.

Baptist said the police will continue to consult with outreach workers to address any concerns.

Get to know Lolo

Lolo sings in the shower

Lolo presses snooze

Lolo makes navy and black look good

Lolo plays board games

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

It's proving more difficult to get wine into grocery stores than beer. **Canada**

Just a walk in the parks

RECREATION

Year-long trek reveals simple upgrade ideas for green space

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

A year-long tour of parks has left one Torontonian with a better appreciation of the city's ravines — and a strong sense that we can do more to grow our green spaces.

Jake Tobin Garrett set out at the beginning of the year to visit at least one park in each of the city's 44 wards. When the project wrapped up this week, he had visited more than 80 parks, taking on everything from bike paths to ice rinks.

"I saw ravines, parkettes and community gardens I'd never have thought existed," he said, mentioning trails in Downsview Park and movie nights in Flemingdon Park as just a couple of the things that took him by surprise.

"People in downtown don't necessarily take advantage of what we have."

Garrett, the research manager for Toronto-based Park People, said that with a little effort, the city's greener areas could become considerably more inviting.

In some places, a trail or ravine path would come to an abrupt end, making it hard for people to navigate without a map. Better signage — or bridging trail gaps — could go a long way toward making parks more user-friendly, he said.

He also noticed a lack of places to sit and relax.

"There are so few benches in Toronto parks it's so astounding," he said.

Now that he's finished his park tour, Garrett said he plans to share his observations with Toronto city planners.

Jake Tobin Garrett has spent the past year visiting parks in every corner of Toronto. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

JAKE TOBIN GARRETT ON SOME OF HIS **FAVOURITE PARKS**

Rouge Beach (Ward 44):
A beautiful, peaceful spot to sit by the water — a reminder of his west-coast hometown.

Giovanni Caboto Park (Ward 9):
A hidden wild space in the middle of a big suburban neighbourhood. It felt like everyone's backyard.

Edwards Gardens (Ward 25):
Like stepping into a Victorian garden painting with paths, waterfalls and rock walls. Best accessed by riding your bike up the Lower Don Trail.

Route 22 (Ward 4):
This off-road bike path leads from the Humber River and follows Eglinton west to trails in beautiful West Dean Park in Etobicoke.

Under the Gardiner (Ward 19 & 20):
Not a park yet, but Garrett expects the two-kilometre stretch of land will likely become one of the most exciting public spaces in the city.

WEATHER

Snow at last, will hit fast

Winter is finally creeping its way to Toronto.

After a mild November and early December — culminating in a not-so-white Christmas — snow will hit the ground in parts of the GTA on Monday evening, according to Environment Canada.

The agency has issued a winter storm watch for Toronto, the GTA and other parts of Southern Ontario. As much as 10 to 15 centimetres of snow and ice pellets is expected, turning to freezing rain early Tuesday.

Monday night will also be windy, with gusts reaching 80 km/h near Lake Ontario.

Environment Canada said the storm will create rough conditions for travel, with visibility dropping to near zero as roads become covered in snow.

On Sunday night, for the first time this winter, temperatures dipped into double negative digits, including the windchill effect. GILBERT NGABO/METRO

IN BRIEF

Father and son told not to shoot arrows in park

A father-son duo was cautioned by police Friday that they couldn't fire arrows into trees at a Toronto park. Duty officer Gary Long said the pair didn't realize shooting arrows there would be frowned upon. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Solo rower's Pacific Ocean achievement

ACHIEVEMENT

Burlington man's 209-day journey is a world first

After 209 days alone at sea, Burlington man John Beeden made landfall Sunday becoming the first person to row solo, non-stop across the Pacific Ocean.

Cookies, family and Cairns, Australia welcomed Beeden around 10 a.m. local time at the end of his 7,400-nautical mile journey that started last June in San Francisco.

As the shore approached, Beeden slept just seven hours over the last 90-hour leg of his journey in a push to end a trip he originally estimated would take 180 days.

"Every day there was some massive challenge," he told Sky News. "It was 10, 15, 100 times harder than I thought it would be."

John Beeden completed his row across the Pacific Sunday. He's the first person to row solo, non-stop from North America to the Australian mainland. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

British-born Beeden, 53, kept in contact with his wife and two daughters, who have called Burlington home since 2004, through blog posts and tweets dispatched from his six-metre vessel in the middle of the ocean.

"I'm exhausted, heat & humidity horrible 2day. Have received some brilliant messages of support which will help get me to the finish line," he tweeted on Christmas Day, just hours before Australia came into sight.

By Sunday, still donning his Tilley hat, he was tweeting from a café.

"Happy to be on land have some ginger nuts," he wrote.

Well-wishers greeted Beeden in the Cairns harbour before he headed for a hotel to enjoy a hot shower and get some rest.

"It will be great to not have to get up and row for 15 hours," he wrote on his website.

Beeden previously sailed the Atlantic Ocean, a journey that took 53 days.

He takes on the challenges, the adventurer wrote on his blog, to "have something worth while on your headstone" and "go down swinging as we age."

He also hopes to inspire his children to take on any challenge and break the "mundane routine" of working for mortgage payments.

And: "Just to feel alive and in control of your own destiny."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CRIME

Police seek suspects in drive-by shooting

Toronto Police are looking for three men after shots were fired into another vehicle at a traffic light early Saturday morning.

Police responded to the call at 12:15 a.m. in the Weston Rd. and Hwy. 401 area. Two men driving in one vehicle had just exited off Hwy. 401 and were travelling southbound on Weston Rd. when they noticed another car following behind.

The second car, a newer-model, charcoal-grey Toyota with bluish headlights, stopped beside the first car at a stop light. One of the men in the second vehicle then flashed a gun and fired several shots at the car.

The driver of the first car was able to get away from the intersection and call police.

No injuries were reported. Police are asking any witnesses to come forward, and requesting the public's help in identifying the Toyota and its occupants.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-3100, or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

Teenage girl stabbed

Police are investigating after a teenage girl was stabbed in the upper thigh in a north Toronto neighbourhood Friday evening.

They say the girl, who has not been publicly identified, was taken to hospital in critical condition and had surgery.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pedestrian fatally struck

One person was pronounced dead on scene after a fatal pedestrian collision on Highway 48 near Princess Street in the Mount Albert area Saturday night. The victim is believed to be male, said OPP Sgt. Kerry Schmidt. The cause of the collision is unknown. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Muslim men and women gather at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Sunday to meet potential marriage partners. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

Matchmaking for Muslims

FAITH

Speed-dating event helps like-minded people meet

Sanam Islam
Metro | Toronto

Like many young women, Mariam is looking to meet Mr. Right and get married. But as someone from the Muslim faith, she doesn't believe in dating.

"If I want to get married, or get to know someone who's Muslim, I thought: Where am I going to find someone who's willing to do that but in a faith-based way?" said the 26-year-old, who didn't want to disclose her full name.

That's why she — along with hundreds of other Muslim men and women — attended a sold-out matrimonial event in Toronto this weekend. Two sessions, each with 230 participants, were held as part of the popular annual Reviving the Islamic Spirit convention at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

"We're just trying to provide an avenue for Muslims to meet other Muslims. Sometimes it's hard to do that in our community. And as people get older, there can be a lot of pressure to get married," says Sarwat Anwer, a volunteer who helped organize the event.

In the past, sessions were led by a group facilitator who used icebreaker questions to encourage conversation.

This year a more conventional speed-dating approach was used in which attendees switched seats every two minutes.

But there are some important differences: The event started off with a lecture about marriage within Islam, and many attendees brought a parent or friend for support.

And for participants' comfort, contact information can only be requested through a facilitator who ensures there is mutual interest.

"There have been a lot of success stories, which is enough to keep us going," Anwer says.

MARRIAGE

Rules of engagement

In Islam, sexual relations are only permitted between a married couple, which is why many Muslims do not date. Muslims today meet their partners in various ways — school, work, online or through mutual acquaintances. Traditionally, parents arrange introductions for their children.

MISSISSAUGA

Fight for parking gets ugly

An Oakville man has been charged with assault following a Boxing Day fight over a mall parking space.

The fight broke out in the lot of Square One shopping centre in Mississauga.

A video posted to Twitter shows two men grappling. A small crowd gathers, and another man in a grey jumpsuit approaches the men to break them apart.

The next shot shows one of the men wiping the blood from his nose and mouth area as four people in the area begin to walk away.

"I found out today why they call it Boxing Day, and it has nothing to do with getting good deals," the man who shot the video says to the camera.

Peel Police also tweeted yesterday, "Officers at Square One arrested 2 parties in assault over a parking spot. Yes we said it "a parking spot". We continue to search for #3."

Salman Aziz, 38, has been charged with assault and dangerous operation of a motor vehicle. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Transit must

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Ex-Budapest agency chief calls for more integration

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

David Vitézy pauses for a second before putting his TTC token into the turnstile at Union Station.

"These are cute," he says of the gold-and-silver tokens. "Although obsolete."

Vitézy was in Toronto this month to talk with Metrolinx about his experience leading Budapest, Hungary's public transit agency. He's only 30, and he's widely acknowledged as an expert in the future of urban mobility.

As head of the Transport Organizer of the Municipality of Budapest, known as BKK, Vitézy helped overhaul a transit system that hadn't had a rethink since the fall of the Berlin Wall. His efforts boosted ridership and revenues, reduced delays and brought Budapest in line with other forward-thinking transit cities like London.

After speaking with Metrolinx, Vitézy spent the day riding transit across Toronto. He trekked from Union Station to York University and back using a mix of subways, streetcars, GO trains and buses.

He said the staff he encountered were "very nice and helpful," and he enjoyed seeing the older streetcars in operation — also a common sight in Budapest, he said. He was also thrilled to see bike racks on buses, something that isn't allowed in Europe.

Vitézy got the impression that transit was a "popular" choice for Torontonians, but he had some suggestions on how to make improvements.

Make transit a priority

Transit policies adopted by governments have an impact on the transit choices made by individuals, Vitézy said. If you build more roads, more people will drive, he said. If you make public transit convenient and accessible, people will leave their cars in the garage.

> **My interest in transit began very young.**
> David Vitézy

Vitézy saw "a lot of opportunities to prioritize transit" in Toronto. He said streetcars in the city should be given dedicated lanes and priority in terms of traffic signals. There's also room for more express lanes for buses and taxis, he said.

True integration

As Metrolinx and the TTC take steps to harmonize their services — particularly around fare payments — Vitézy said Toronto needs more integration. In particular, the city's Bike Share program should be folded into the TTC to encourage multi-modal transit and add extra value for customers, he said.

In Budapest, the BKK is an integrated "transport" agency,

Humans of Toronto by K. Omar

"I love my sister, she's my twin actually. This one time, when I was nine years old, we went to this abandoned house and she fell down into the basement and sprained her ankle. I helped her get back up. I was proud of myself and the fact that I could help. It's my happiest and proudest moment as a kid. I also loved singing Queen's We Are The Champions.

Humans of Toronto is K. Omar's social photography project aimed at photographing and talking to people in the city. Selections from her work feature weekly in Metro. See more at Humans_of_Toronto on Instagram.

become a priority: Expert

Dávid Vitézy, former head of the public transit agency in Budapest, Hungary, rode the TTC with Metro during a trip to Toronto.
LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

not just a public transit provider, Vitézy said. The organization oversees things like the maintenance of public roads, traffic management and cycling infrastructure.

"You can only deliver results if the governance is integrated," he said. "Without it, the interests of all the different stakeholders will compete and kill it."

Updating fare systems

Like Toronto, Budapest has yet to modernize its fare system. We have tokens; they rely on paper tickets. However, being late to the fare game may be a blessing in disguise, Vitézy said.

"We waited on the technology … but now there's a chance to get ahead," he said, noting newer smart cards systems, like the TTC and GO's Presto card, are better able to handle multiple payment options.

"Last time I was in London, I was able to ride the whole system and pay using my contactless Hungarian bank card," he said. "It's multi-modal and integrated at a very high level."

"The whole morality of the company changed," he said.

He cracked down on fare evasion, and installed a new network of vending machines to help customers buy tickets more easily. He also cut the cost of monthly passes by 10 per cent, which led to an increase in revenue.

Any remaining tram lines that did not already have a dedicated lane were given one and the traffic signals on the city's ring road we retimed to favour transit. The strategy increased capacity on the busiest tram lines, Vitézy said, but put him at odds with politicians and drivers upset that space was being taken away from cars.

Vitézy says he empathizes with transit planners in Toronto: "It's hard for drivers to understand that good transit is in their best interests too because it means maybe a few cars will leave the road," he said. LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

WHO IS DÁVID VITÉZY?

At 17, Vitézy helped found the Urban and Suburban Transit Association, a public transit NGO in his native Hungary.

The group convinced transit officials in Budapest to expand night bus service, piggybacking on routes that were used only to take drivers and vehicles back to their depots. The result? A 300 per cent increase in night bus ridership, he said.

Vitézy was tapped to lead the newly-formed Transport Organizer of the Municipality of Budapest, known as BKK, in 2010. His task was to integrate every transportation department under BKK.

Vitézy set about making changes to the city's transit system. He rewrote contracts for transit providers — 50 per cent of bus routes in the city are run by private contractors — stipulating penalties for poor service. He also tied management compensation to those same metrics.

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Upper Canada Mall
Vaughan Mills
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Yorkdale Mall

Young Syrians play in a refugee camp in Jordan. Buffing Canada's tarnished image will depend on the government's commitment to foreign aid. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Foreign-aid agencies hope for funding from Liberals

POVERTY

Tories froze development assistance in 2010

With key figures in the newly elected Liberal government crowing that "Canada is back" as an influential global player, few are happier to hope so than those who work with the world's poorest and hungriest people.

While campaigning, the Liberals said the Harper government had shifted aid priorities to "reflect political and commercial interests to the detriment of the needs of the poorest and most fragile countries." They promised to restore Canada's status as an "engaged player on the world stage."

Organizations on the front lines of world poverty, heartened by the new tone, will be watching carefully to see if Liberal deeds match good intentions.

Over the last decade, Canada has been a diminishing actor in foreign aid, with spending falling to $4.2 billion in 2014, down from $5.6 billion two years earlier.

Despite long-standing pledges to commit 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income to foreign aid (a level first championed by former prime minister Lester Pearson), the level fell last year to 0.24 per cent.

We have a country full of amazing experts in a wide variety of areas, and I think those experts were one of the best-kept secrets in Canada.
Gillian Barth, president of CARE Canada

After a respectable start on the foreign-aid file, the former Conservative government announced in 2010 a five-year freeze on development assistance in order to address its deficit at home.

The freeze was scheduled to end this year, but was extended in the April budget.

As well as reduced funding, there were concerns as well that the Harper government had shifted assistance from sub-Saharan Africa, where need is acute, to better-off countries that had trade potential.

The prospect of a more collaborative approach gladdens aid agencies.

"We have the practical knowledge and the relationships within country to really inform — from an evidence-based perspective — what can work," said Cicely McWilliam of Save the Children Canada.

Gillian Barth, president of CARE Canada, said: "We have a country full of amazing experts in a wide variety of areas, and I think those experts were one of the best-kept secrets in Canada."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RETAIL

Wine in grocery stores tricky

Queen's Park is hoping 2016 will be a vintage year for Ontario wine drinkers.

With six-packs of beer finally available on the first supermarket shelves in December, Premier Kathleen Wynne wants to uncork more good news for consumers in the new year. But getting wine into grocery stores is proving to be even trickier than breaking the Beer Store monopoly.

Ontario's privately owned Wine Rack and Wine Shop kiosks now operating inside many supermarkets have licences that predate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Those 268 licensees are permitted to sell quality VQA wine made here as well as blended foreign wine bottled in Ontario. It's a valuable exemption that benefits some domestic producers, and one that could be at risk if wide-open sales are permitted.

Currently, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario has a retail monopoly on wines from France, Italy, Spain, Australia, Argentina, the U.S. and other countries.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Premier Kathleen Wynne wants wine in grocery stores in the new year. ISTOCK

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WINTER STORM SNOWFALL WARNING ISSUED FOR EAST COAST People walk across a pedestrian bridge during a snowstorm in Fredericton, N.B., on Sunday. Environment Canada has issued snowfall warnings for parts of mainland Nova Scotia and southern New Brunswick, saying up to 20 centimetres is expected in some areas. DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Little-known treaty helped hundreds

LUMBER

Now expired softwood deal was pivotal for families in U.S.

One little-known legacy of the now-expiring softwood lumber agreement: it spawned a massive, Canadian-funded humanitarian effort in the United States that people north of the border have never heard of.

Funds dispersed with little fanfare under the decade-old Canada-U.S. deal built hundreds of houses in places like Hurricane Katrina-ravaged New Orleans, affecting lives like Sheldonna Durosseau's.

Durosseau gets teary-eyed describing the impact of home ownership on her and her daughter, on the one-year anniversary of their move into a neighbourhood filled with post-Hurricane Katrina construction projects.

"Now I have a sidewalk where my daughter can actually go ride her bicycle, skate, do hopscotch, kid things," said the 34-year-old mom and university custodian.

Stories like Durosseau's abound in disaster-affected areas of the U.S.: the New Orleans flood of 2005, the eastern seaboard after Hurricane Sandy in 2012, parts of Colorado flooded in 2013, a tornado-stricken area of Missouri in 2011.

That's because the 2006 Canada-U.S. agreement did more than bring a decade of peace to a perennially problematic trade file. One of its provisions was a guarantee that $500 million of the penalties previously levied on the Canadian lumber industry wouldn't remain in the American treasury, or go to American businesses.

It went to American charities.

One was Habitat for Humanity. The organization has built 19,000 houses since that time in hundreds of places, benefiting 70,000 people in the U.S. — and it estimates the softwood funds built five per cent of them.

"The softwood-lumber program has been enormously helpful," said Fiona Eastwood, a national director at Habitat for Humanity. "It's had a tremendous impact here."

In 2006, Canada and the U.S. signed a nine-year agreement that set aside lawsuits and punitive tariffs against imported wood from Canada. It brought temporary peace in a recurring spat over whether Canadian lumber businesses get an unfair subsidy through cheap access to public land.

The deal included plans for spending more than $5 billion the U.S. had collected in penalties over the years on Canadian companies. Most was refunded. The U.S. got to keep $1 billion. Half that sum went to U.S. companies — something the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives grumbled would subsidize future lawsuits and was akin to handing money to the schoolyard bully.

The other half went to charities. THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **I'm not at all optimistic that there will be a new softwood-lumber agreement negotiated. There's a sort of impasse.**
> Laura Dawson, head of Washington-based Wilson Center's Canada Institute

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Eric Martin kicks debris from Shipman Street while cleaning up after Saturday's tornado in Rowlett, Texas on Sunday. Tornadoes that swept through the Dallas area caused substantial damage and at least 11 people died either from the storm or related traffic accidents and dozens of people were injured. NATHAN HUNSINGER/THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At least 23 killed as severe weather hits

U.S.

Tornadoes in Texas, flooding in Midwest and Southeast

At least 11 people died and dozens were injured in strong tornadoes that swept through the Dallas area and caused substantial damage this weekend, while 12 people died in flooding in the Midwest.

It was the latest of a succession of powerful weather events across the country, from heavy snow in New Mexico, west Texas and the Oklahoma Panhandle to flash flooding in parts of the Plains and Midwest. Days of tumultuous weather have led to 42 deaths overall — those in Texas, plus five in Illinois, seven in Missouri and 19 in the Southeast.

The full extent of damage along a nearly 65-kilometre stretch near Dallas was becoming clear Sunday: houses destroyed, vehicles mangled, power lines down and trees toppled. The weather service said an EF-4 tornado, which is the second-most powerful with winds up to more than 320 km/h, hit Garland, a community about 24 km northeast of Dallas, at about 6:45 p.m. Saturday.

The destruction in Garland was so overwhelming that Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins declared the city a disaster within mere minutes of seeing the toll firsthand.

"I don't declare local disasters lightly," Jenkins said.

> **I grabbed both dogs by the collars and held on to the toilet. I said 'OK this could be it boys.'**
>
> Dale Vermurlen, resident of Rowlett, Texas where a presumed EF-3 tornado hit

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott made disaster declarations for four counties — Dallas, Collin, Rockwall and Ellis — on Sunday and warned that the number of victims could rise.

Meanwhile, Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency as there were blizzard conditions and an ice storm warning out west and flood warnings in the east, where one community had received 9 inches of rain.

Further north, rain caused dangerous driving conditions and flooding in Missouri and Illinois. Six people died overnight when two separate vehicles drove into flooded roadways in south-central Missouri, Pulaski County Sheriff Ronald Long said. Also Saturday, three adults and two children drowned in southern Illinois when the vehicle they were riding in was swept away and sank in a rain-swollen creek.

The death toll in the Southeast linked to severe weather rose to 19 on Sunday. Ten people have died in Mississippi, and six died in Tennessee. One person was killed in Arkansas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EVACUATIONS

Deluge continues in northern England

British Prime Minister David Cameron sent hundreds more troops into northern England on Sunday to help exhausted residents and emergency workers fight back rising river waters that have inundated towns and cities after weeks of heavy rain.

Cameron said the flooding is "unprecedented" and vowed to do everything possible to protect people and their property as the damage spread to the major cities York, Leeds and Manchester. He said protective systems and contingency plans will be reviewed because the frequency of such extreme weather events seems to be on the rise.

Weeks of persistent rainfall have saturated the ground and swollen the rivers to record levels, leaving entire swathes of northern England, and smaller parts of Wales and Scotland, vulnerable. Several hundred flood warnings remain in effect.

There have been no fatalities or serious injuries reported, but hundreds of people have been evacuated from houses and apartments in York, 320 kilometres north of London, where 3,500 properties are judged to be at risk.

Emergency crews worked extra shifts to try to restore power to roughly 7,500 blacked out homes in the greater Manchester and Lancashire areas.

Environment Secretary Liz Truss said flood protection systems put in place in recent years were unable to cope with the record-high river levels.

"In Lancashire every single river was at a record high," she said. "In Yorkshire we have seen some rivers a metre higher than they have ever been before. Clearly, in the light of that, we will be reviewing our flood defences."

Several hundred people had been evacuated the day before in the West Yorkshire and Lancashire regions and officials said thousands had lost power. The number of people affected continues to grow as flooding spreads and impacts cities as well as villages and towns.

The Environment Agency urged residents to remain vigilant because more "severe" flooding is expected overnight and Monday.

The agency used its Twitter feed to beg people to be cautious, tweeting that driving or walking in flowing flood waters could be life-threatening.

Rescue crews have been using boats to help remove people from their homes and in some cases from their nearly submerged vehicles.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Members of the emergency services search for residents in need of rescue after the adjacent **River Foss burst its banks** in York, northern England, on Sunday. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

AFGHANISTAN

8 rival fighters killed

Afghanistan's Islamic State affiliate and a rival militia controlled by a prominent lawmaker have killed eight captured fighters from both sides in a brutal killing spree in the eastern border province of Nangarhar, an Afghan official said on Sunday.

According to Ghalib Mujahid, the governor of the Achin district in Nangarhar, each group beheaded at least four fighters from the rival group who were captured during battles on Saturday.

The militia is loyal to Zahir Qadir, Afghanistan's deputy speaker of parliament. Mujahid said Qadir's militiamen killed the captive IS gunmen and put their heads on display along a main road through the district.

The killings reflect rampant lawlessness in this remote part of Afghanistan. It is not unusual for powerful Afghan figures and politicians to control personal militias, though the central government and international organizations such as the United Nations have expressed concern about a proliferation of armed groups that are not part of the government's security force.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLICE

Officer kills two in Chicago

Grieving relatives and friends of two people shot and killed by Chicago police said Sunday that the city's law enforcement officers had failed its residents.

Quintonio LeGrier, 19, was killed early Saturday by police responding to a domestic disturbance, along with downstairs neighbour Bettie Jones, 55, police said. Jones was hit accidentally by the gunfire, the police said. Both victims were black.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Uber-like snow-removal service on way

MARITIMES

Idea came after last year's record precipitation

A New Brunswick man wants Atlantic Canadians to give their backs a break from shovelling this winter with a new on-demand snow-removal service.

Sean Griffith is launching an Uber-like service in the coming weeks in Halifax and Moncton and Saint John, N.B., with plans to eventually roll out the business countrywide.

Griffith said the idea for Plow Me Out came after last year's brutal winter in the Maritimes, which saw record-breaking snowfall amounts.

"After moving into our first house, we realized that we get a lot of snow and shovelling it ourselves really isn't working," he said. "But we still weren't ready to commit to a yearly contract and we tried to find somebody who could do it on a one-off basis, but didn't have much luck."

Griffith said people will create an account on their website or through the Plow Me Out app and will answer a few questions about their driveway, which will render a quote.

Once the snow clearing is requested, a notification goes out to an array of snow contractors in the area, he said.

Customers will also be able to pay online through Plow Me Out from the comfort of their couch.

He said the request can be made from anywhere, so travellers won't have to dig their way into their homes when they return. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sean Griffith has created an app that lets people order one-time snow clearing via their smartphones. THE CANADIAN PRESS

AIR SAFETY

More birds getting hit by helicopters

Reports of helicopter-bird strikes are up dramatically in recent years, including incidents that damage the aircraft and create the potential for crashes, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

In 2013, there were 204 reported helicopter-bird strikes, a 68 per cent increase from 2009, when there were 121 reports and an increase of over 700 per cent since the early 2000s, said Gary Roach, an FAA helicopter safety engineer.

3.8M

Canada goose population in the U.S. and Canada in 2013, up from about 500,000 in 1980.

The increase is due partly to greater awareness among pilots about the importance of reporting bird strikes. But another reason is that populations of large bird species are on the rise in North America, creating the potential for more dangerous strikes.

Despite the increase in big birds and overall bird strikes, the number of incidents in which airliners and other fixed-wing planes suffered serious damage from a bird strike has been dropping, in part because of efforts to keep airports and their surroundings free of large birds. The reverse is true of helicopters, which fly at lower altitudes around lots of birds.

Roach and his colleagues at FAA's helicopter directorate are urging that a special industry committee be established with government backing to examine whether there should be changes in the standards for helicopter construction and operation to better protect against bird strikes. The committee would also investigate whether technology is available to quickly disperse birds in the way of helicopters, possibly using strobe lights.

FAA regulations, developed in the 1960s and 1970s, require airliner windshields and airframe surfaces to withstand the impact of a four-pound bird, and the tail to withstand an eight-pound bird. For helicopters weighing more than 7,000 pounds windshields must withstand a 2.2-pound bird. But no bird-strike safety standards exist for helicopters weighing less than 7,000 pounds, or about 90 per cent of the U.S. fleet, including all tour and medical helicopters. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILESTONE

Atlanta airport welcomes its millionth passenger

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport said it hit a major milestone Sunday.

The airport that calls itself the world's busiest announced on its social media sites that it served its 100 millionth passenger this year. That makes it the first single airport to serve that number of passengers in one calendar year.

The passenger earning the distinction is Larry Kendrick of Gulfport, Miss., who will receive a Nissan Altima, two free Delta round-trip plane tickets and a $500 US gift card. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed welcomed a surprised Kendrick, who walked down a red carpet as journalists and onlookers recorded the moment.

Hartsfield-Jackson general manager Miguel Southwell says the airport had a five per cent increase in passenger counts this year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Monday, December 28, 2015

CHRISTOPHER HUME: ON HOPING FOR SOMETHING BETTER

“For Canada, 2015 was an annus that started horribilis but ended mirabilis. For Toronto, it was the opposite; a year that began so hopefully got bogged down.

For Canada, 2015 was an annus that started horribilis but ended mirabilis. For Toronto, it was the opposite; a year that began so hopefully got bogged down in the usual bickering and boneheadedness.

The big news, of course, was the rejection — no, repudiation — of Stephen Harper. His departure wasn't just the end of an era, it was the lifting of a decade of darkness. The dismantling of the Conservative legacy, which began within hours if not minutes of the election, has already transformed the country.

The overnight shift from cynicism to optimism, negative to positive, illusion to reality, accomplished in the blink of an eye, has been extraordinary to witness. A country ignored by the world suddenly found itself the object of global admiration. A nation hungry for leadership responded with unabashed enthusiasm. One need look no further than the overwhelming response to the Syrian refugee crisis. As much as the 25,000 migrants who make it here will benefit from this humanitarian outpouring, the real winners are Canadians, who finally got a chance to feel good about themselves.

For the city, the good news started in 2014 when Rob Ford withdrew from the mayoral race clearing the way for John Tory to take over in January. The former, of course, was a disaster of global proportions.

Councillors are learning to make nice, but their grasp on reality remains shaky.

2015 STARTED SMOOTHLY IN TORONTO. Mayor John Tory skates with his wife Barbara Hackett at Nathan Phillips Square on Jan. 1 of 2015. He didn't slip up on the ice, but he and city council have hit some rough patches this year.
T. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The latter, despite his dusty thinking and retro sensibilities, brought dignity, decency and credibility to the chief magistrate's office.

While the change in style was welcome, the problem of substance continues. Councillors are learning to make nice, but their grasp on reality remains shaky.

Despite the mayor's earnest pronouncements, the $3.5-billion Scarborough subway still makes no sense and spending another $450 million to move and expand the east end of the Gardiner Expressway represents a missed opportunity of historic proportions. And although Tory bravely proposed a new “levy” to pay for transit, that long-promised “adult conversation” about taxes has yet to take place.

As a result, even if the city knew how to fund its infrastructure needs, it can't decide what those needs are. Trudeau has committed $125 billion to infrastructure over 10 years. That's a great start, but odds are Toronto will devote its share to accommodating drivers and expensive subways to nowhere.

At the same time, Canada moved beyond knee-jerk climate change denial and finally acknowledged that the environment is the issue of the age.

Shrugs and indifference have given way to acceptance and even resolve. Today there's talk about the enormous economic potential of going green, something not heard in these parts for years.

But the culture of denial runs deep; the return to the real world won't be easy. Regardless, in 2015 the process was launched, even if only just. Resistance, however futile, is inevitable. Though some insist we can't afford to get smart, and a few still maintain that climate change has nothing to do with us, the signs are good. Momentum is starting to build, even if the hard work lies ahead.

It's too soon to say where it will lead. Canada has lost years. But 2015 will be remembered as a turning point, the year when Canada, even Toronto, redefined themselves. It remains to be seen whether Trudeau's relentless optimism will be enough to turn things around, to succeed. For now, though, the more important thing is that the prime minister's “sunny ways” were exactly what Canadians desperately wanted. In 2015 they made that abundantly clear.

Christopher Hume is a city columnist for the Toronto Star.

ROSIE DIMANNO
metroview

To err is human, but to catch a real screw-up is sublime

I'll regret the errors.

And the corrections and clarifications.

We journalists do make enormous efforts to get it right. But sometimes we get it wrong — inadvertently, stupidly, sloppily — because journalism isn't an error-proof zone. Readers catch the inaccuracies, however, for which I am grateful, even when they're snide about it.

Often I bolt straight up in the middle of the night, awakened by that auto-correct function in my brain, with the realization of a mistake made. Thus emails to the web desk for an online fix.

A couple of months ago, I mistook the sister of a murder victim for their mother, which mutated all the observations which followed. I should have double-checked. But if you don't know you've made a mistake, then you're not catching it in the glancing read-over before filing, especially on deadline.

We aim for transparency and an ungrudging admission of fallibility, though I do think some of our corrections/clarifications are absurd, merely specks visible only under a microscope. But some people read the paper that way, pouncing on minutiae of fact or, for all the finger-wagging schoolmarms out there, grammar and spelling. Auto-correct in fact inserts errors because a computer can't tell the difference, for instance, between “demur” and “demure” (me again) or discrete and discreet (yup, me).

Corrections — and the mistakes they aim to set right — are frequently howlers. Here are two of my favourites this year, culled from, various sources:

From the New York Times,: “An earlier version of this article misidentified one of the guests at Ms. Leifer and Ms. Wolf's wedding reception. He is Garry Shandling — not Larry Sanders, a character played by Mr. Shandling.”

The Daily Express in the U.K. was forced by the Independent Standards Organization to run this correction on the front page: “The Complaints Committee found that the article's claims that English is 'starting to die out' in schools and that English was 'hardly heard at all' in some schools were completely unsupported by the data the newspaper had cited. These claims distorted the data cited by the newspaper, which did not include any information about the frequency with which English was spoken in schools, by either pupils or teachers.”

If I've made any mistakes, take it to the Public Editor.

Rosie DiManno is a columnist for the Toronto Star. **Rosemary Westwood** will return on Jan. 4.

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NO MIRACLE CURE HERE

Ohayo, sold in the U.K., is billed as a "super hydration" drink that will help your body feel better after drinking alcohol. But a registered dietitian warns against "miracle cures" and says to stick to water.

Anatomy of a hangover

The morning after hurts. But do you really know what's going on when you've had too much to drink the night before?

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Even researchers aren't totally sure what's happening to you during a hangover — finding a cure is "like whack-a-mole," says Darren Kruisselbrink, with Acadia University's kinesiology department. We've sifted through some of the literature to help make sense of your morning-after sensations.

Head

Your temples are pounding, your ears are ringing, and the lights are too, too bright. Research by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism says intoxication leads to vasodilatation — the dilation of blood vessels, decreasing blood pressure — which might be the reason for the most common of hangover symptoms: the headache.

It doesn't end there. "Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways," according to the NIAAA. "These disruptions can change mood and behaviour, and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination."

Some sufferers may be overcome with anxiety, which researchers have suspected is a symptom of alcohol withdrawal after several days of drinking.

Eyes

Just because you pass out quickly at the end of the night and stay in bed all day, you won't necessarily feel rested. Drinking can mean you'll spend more time in "slow-wave" sleep and less time in satisfying REM (rapid eye movement), according to the NIAAA. No wonder you're so fatigued and drowsy.

Mouth

Thirsty? A dry mouth is often indicative of dehydration, one of the most direct effects of excessive alcohol consumption. If you're really dehydrated, you can expect to feel weak, dizzy and light-headed too.

Research by the Utrecht Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences suggests drinking water before bed and/or during your hangover may reduce some of these symptoms of dehydration, but that "it is unlikely that rehydration significantly reduces the presence and severity of alcohol hangover."

Heart

When your heart is pounding irregularly the next day, think of it as thrashing about in protest. "Drinking a lot over a long time or too much on a single occasion can damage the heart," according to the NIAAA. That can lead to problems like irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, and the stretching and drooping of heart muscles. Chronic drinkers may need to worry about increased risks of stroke, heart attack and failure.

Liver

The liver takes the biggest hit. Since its job is to break down the bad stuff, it takes a beating. Alcohol can interfere with glucose production, and in extreme cases of binge drinking, can result in "alcohol-induced hypoglycemia." Without enough glucose in the body, you can expect fatigue, weakness and mood disturbances.

Stomach

Alcohol inflames the stomach lining, delays stomach emptying and produces gastric acid, which may result in the all-too-common nausea and vomiting.

Some research suggests the culprit may be a substance called acetaldehyde. That's what your body converts alcohol into after it's broken down. "Acetaldehyde is highly reactive and can cause tissue damage due to its toxic effects," says research by the Utrecht Institute, "which may lead to hangover-like symptoms such as nausea, sweating, rapid pulse and headache."

Pancreas

Drinking prevents the pancreas from doing its job aiding digestion after a night of drinking, leading to indigestion. This can eventually lead to pancreatitis, according to NIAAA.

Hands

Your average hangover shouldn't involve tremors. If it does, consider seeing a doctor. This could be a sign of alcohol withdrawal. Symptoms of withdrawal are often teamed with anxiety and nausea, but can be as extreme as hallucinations and seizures.

Bladder

Forget "don't break the seal," that common refrain you hear from friends when you say you need to run to the bathroom at the party. It doesn't really matter how long you wait to go to the bathroom. Alcohol is a diuretic that will send you there anyway. According to research by the NIAAA, drinking promotes urine production by interfering with the release of the hormone vasopressin, which helps the kidneys retain water.

Sexual organs

More research has been done on alcohol and erectile dysfunction than hangovers in general. The verdict: Performance issues can surface when alcohol is in play. For both men and women, alcohol abuse can also lead to infertility, the NIAAA warns.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

We spoke with registered dietitian Abby Langer about the best — and worst — breakfasts to consume while hungover

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BLOODY MARY

Beware hair-of-the-dog

We've all been there. After a night of drinking, the only thing that sounds palatable to some is...more alcohol.

What the dietitian said: "Don't do it!" Drinking more alcohol will just dehydrate you further and delay the inevitable, said Langer. "You're going to be hungover no matter what, so do not have a bloody Mary or whatever to soften the blow."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE GREASY SPOON

Pass on fry-up

This is what many of us crave and actually do end up eating. But a mound of fried food isn't good for you.

What the dietitian said: Order eggs, toast and fruit or salad. The eggs will give you protein, the toast will give you carbs and the fruit or salad will give you nutrients. If you must, order two slices of bacon to satisfy your salt craving, said Langer. Just don't order the greasy potatoes or hashbrowns or double up on the carbs.

SALAD

Eat veggies

A salad may be the last thing you want to eat when hungover. Make sure you can keep it down before ordering.

What the dietitian said: Langer recommends eating a huge salad with arugula, fresh vegetables, tuna in olive oil, avocado and goat cheese or feta. The colourful breakfast will give your tastebuds the salt they want and your body the fats and protein it needs. Langer insists she actually eats this when hungover.

ISTOCK

‘We’re selling a vision for the city’

I try to listen when other people are the experts . . . and let them lead unless something feels wrong. Then I’ll voice my opinion as opposed to an edict.

Gavin Sheppard

Gavin Sheppard is the founder of The Remix Project, a non-profit created to help level the playing field in the arts for young people from disadvantaged communities. KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INTERVIEW

Remix Project founder talks connecting with youth

The son of a writer and an artist, Gavin Sheppard always had an itch to create.

Thus, his visits to the closest community centre as a child, where the focus was on recreation, weren’t thrilling, he says.

“Our public spaces need to be more about engagement and propelling young people forward,” says the co-founder and CEO of the Remix Project, which helps youth from marginalized communities break into the creative industries. Sheppard’s resume includes everything from selling mix tapes for DJs in high school to managing artists, and his deep industry connections have helped launch the Remix Project. Even more crucial, however, are his unparalleled dedication to and understanding of Toronto’s youth.

What was it about Remix that appealed to you more than staying in the music business?

When you’re getting established, you’re operating at a loss for a long, long time — you’re operating off credit, off passion, off belief. This (project) offered me a way to stay in the industry and work with young, talented people, but also have a steady income and some stability . . . That’s something people in Toronto are facing all the time, and I think we lose a lot of brilliant ideas to the instability of peoples’ lives. It was also just recognizing who I am and what my strengths are — I’m a connector and someone who’s constantly interested in what’s next and what’s happening.

What makes the Remix Project different from other youth programs?

We’re an intermediary. There are a lot of phenomenal entry-level programs, but not a lot of now-whats, meaning, “I’ve discovered a passion and figured out what I want to do, so now what?” Remix is ... that place between the discovery of a passion and the professionalization of skills. We’re also focused on creative industries, whereas others focus on entrepreneurship and other things . . .

And of course, at our core, we’re participant-led and youth-led ... It’s the participants themselves directing their education. They’re saying this is what I want to learn, this is what I want to do, this is why I want to do it.

What’s your leadership style?

I’m a subscriber to the belief that leadership comes from the expert in the room. If you’re the CEO of a company, you have the responsibility at the end of the day in terms of the final decisions that are made, but in terms of leadership, it comes from whoever the expert is at the time.

What’s the biggest challenge of running an organization like yours in Toronto?

As with any youth organization, it’s core funding. We’re not selling a product or service — we’re selling a vision for the city. It takes time to manifest, and when it does, it doesn’t necessarily lead dollars back into our program... Of course, we’ll have little victories along the way, where we see someone get a job or a placement or housing. And while these victories are important, what we’re selling is a vision for what our city is going to look like when (youth) come into their own. It’s a challenge we face all the time.

What do business leaders and politicians need to understand about how to reach youth?

Reaching young people is about understanding where they’re at, and not necessarily asking them to come to us, to leave their comfort zone, and meet with people they’ve never engaged with.

You have to go to where the people are. That doesn’t necessarily mean the community centre — it could mean the social networks they’re on.

It’s also about understanding the dialects they’re speaking. The best example of that is Councillor Norm Kelly.... He has this rabid following of young people now, and it’s ironic because many of them probably don’t believe in his policies, but he’s got such a brilliant understanding of young people and pop culture and what that represents.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PRUDENCE

Five financial tips for new parents

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

If you’ve spent the last few days staring into your beautiful new baby’s face, you know you’re now the proud Momma or Poppa of a huge responsibility.

It’s easy to let the mundane money minutia slip by unnoticed. Who wants to bother balancing a budget when you can sit counting those beautiful fingers and toes?

But letting things slide won’t feel so warm and fuzzy when the collection calls start coming.

And this is no time to put your family at risk simply because you’ve got the best excuse ever to ignore your money.

Here are five tips to help keep you on track.

SHOP SMART
DON’T MAKE IMPULSE BABY-RELATED PURCHASES

Revise your budget

You have a budget right? RIGHT?

Well now that your family income may have gone down — no one gets rich on maternity leave benefits — it’s time to do some revising.

The last thing you want to do is end up filling the gap between your income and your spending with credit. There’s a whack of new expenses that you’ll need to work into your plan.

Before you lay out a cent, you’ve got to adjust your budget.

Shop with a list

Shopping for baby can be fun, but if you let your excitement (or your hormones) drive your spending, you’ll be sorry.

Everything baby-sized is cute. No doubt you’ll want new and shiny for your sweet and beautiful. But if you leave the house without a shopping list, every time you go into a store you’ll have the word “sucker” flashing on your forehead. Impulse shopping is no way to stay on budget. Make a list before you head out the door.

If it isn’t on the list, don’t buy it. You can always add it to your list for your next shop if you decide you really are prepared to spend the money.

Get some insurance

As responsible new parents, you will want to protect your baby’s future.

That means ensuring there’s enough money to see the family through whatever may happen.

Life insurance for both parents is no longer a nice-to-have. Disability insurance is also a must.

Skip insurance on baby unless you have horrible diseases in your family and want to guarantee your kid’s future insurability.

Set up an RESP

Steer clear of the group or Scholarship Trust RESPs since they come with higher fees and more rules.

As little as $100 a month will do the job, but $208 a month will get you the maximum Canada Education Savings Grant money. Yup, the federal government will actually give you free money for opening up an RESP.

You’ll get a bonus of 20 per cent to a max of $500 a year per child.

Take the free money.

Make a will

It’s easy to let this one slip.

Thinking about your own demise just when you’ve brought new hope into your world is yucky.

But if you don’t have a Will and a Guardianship Appointment (and powers of attorney for personal care and finances while you’re at it), you’re leaving it up to the system to make those decisions for you should the worst happen.

And you do NOT want to do that.

For more money advice, visit Gail’s website at gailvazoxlade.com

It’s easy to put money issues on the back burner when you’ve got a new bundle of joy, but it’s still important to keep on top of finances. ISTOCK

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Trailblazing filmmaker Haskell Wexler dead at 93

OBITUARY

Long legacy of social activist and cinematic visionary

Haskell Wexler, one of Hollywood's most famous and honoured cinematographers and one whose innovative approach helped him win Oscars for Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and the Woody Guthrie biopic Bound for Glory, died Sunday. He was 93.

Wexler died peacefully in his sleep, his son, Oscar-nominated sound man Jeff Wexler, told The Associated Press.

A liberal activist, Chicago-born Wexler photographed some of the most socially relevant and influential films of the 1960s and 1970s, including the Jane Fonda-Jon Voight anti-war classic Coming Home, the Sidney Poitier-Rod Steiger racial drama In the Heat of the Night and the Oscar-winning adaptation of Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.

Born on Feb. 6, 1922, Wexler became a rare cinematographer known enough to the general public to receive a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

When Wexler wasn't working on big-budget studio fare, he travelled the world directing and photographing documentaries for favourite causes.

His 1969 Medium Cool mixed documentary and dramatic elements, telling the story of a fictional television photographer (Robert Forster) who covers the violence between Chicago police and protesters at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The real-life unrest was filmed on the spot for the movie, and its "cinéma vérité" approach was closely studied by aspiring filmmakers.

Top: Scene from Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, for which Wexler won an Oscar for his work. Right: In this 1983 file photo, Wexler, left, appears with director Blake Edwards during the filming of The Man Who Loved Women. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"I was under surveillance for the entire seven weeks I was in Chicago, by the police, the army and the Secret Service," Wexler once told a reporter.

For one of his documentaries, 2006's Who Needs Sleep?, Wexler turned his attention to the film industry itself, decrying the long hours endured by Hollywood set workers. It was inspired by the death of a worker who fell asleep driving his car after a 19-hour stint on a movie set.

Wexler's other documentaries include: The Bus, about the Freedom Riders who risked their lives to integrate the South in the 1960s; Latino, which examined American policy in Nicaragua; Interviews with My Lai Veterans, which shined a light on survivors of U.S. brutality in Vietnam; and Brazil: Report on Torture.

Throughout his career, Wexler was noted for his versatile and intuitive approach.

For Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, the last film to receive an Oscar for best black and white cinematography, he used handheld cameras to capture the tension of the tirades between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. For In the Heat of the Night, he put silks over the tops of sets and aimed lights at their centres. His aim was to contribute to the tension between Poitier's big-city black detective and Steiger's Southern white lawman.

His last film credit, the biopic To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine, is in postproduction, according to the Internet Movie Database.

In addition to his sons Jeff and Mark, Wexler is survived by a daughter, Kathy Wexler, and his wife, Rita Taggart.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BLOCKBUSTER

Star Wars smashes records at light speed

Star Wars: The Force Awakens has reached $1 billion at the box office, reaching the milestone with record-setting hyper speed.

The Walt Disney Co. said The Force Awakens crossed the billion-dollar mark Sunday, accomplishing the feat in just 12 days. The previous movie to reach $1 billion the fastest was Universal's Jurassic World, which did it in 13 days in June. Jurassic World also had the benefit of record grosses in China. The Force Awakens doesn't open in the world's second-largest movie market until Jan. 9.

J.J. Abrams' instalment of Star Wars also posted the biggest Christmas Day box office in history with $49.3 million and the best second-weekend earnings with $153.5 million.

The Force Awakens has been setting records since its debut Dec. 17. It brought in a galactic $238 million in North America over its opening weekend, besting previous record-setter Jurassic World, and set international opening-weekend records in Australia, New Zealand and throughout Europe. It scored the biggest worldwide debut with $529 million. It also topped $100 million in IMAX screenings in 10 days, another global record.

"You almost have to rewrite all the record books for this movie," box office analyst Paul Dergarabedian of Rentrak said.

"It's absolutely mind-blowing that Star Wars could get to a billion dollars in 12 days and it hasn't even opened in China."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

$1B

The Force Awakens hit the billion-dollar box office milestone in a record 12 days.

PRODUCTION

E-retailer Amazon is gunning for an Oscar

U.S. online retail giant Amazon said Sunday it plans to produce 16 feature films a year, throwing down the gauntlet to Netflix, whose African war drama Beasts of No Nation may be headed for Oscar glory in February.

"We want to win an Oscar," Amazon boss Jeff Bezos told Sunday's edition of the German daily Die Welt.

With its Prime subscription service, Amazon has invested heavily in boosting its video content, and like Netflix has gone into original production, both in TV series and now in cinema.

Amazon won five Emmys for the TV comedy series Transparent this year.

The feature films will hit the big screen and be quickly available on Amazon's online service.

Netflix for its part is targeting 10 feature releases while roughly doubling its production of TV series to 31 next year.

Bezos said he is also mulling acquiring the rights to rebroadcast world football championships such as the English Premier League and Germany's Bundesliga.

The Amazon boss also said he was awaiting the green light for a planned "Prime Air" service to deliver retail goods to customers.

"The technology is already developed," he added, noting that Britain or Germany may obtain permission to use the delivery method before the United States.

Amazon, created in 1994, has sold books via the Internet since 1995 and has since rapidly expanded to other goods and services. AFP

Amazon original series Transparent took home five Emmys this year. CONTRIBUTED

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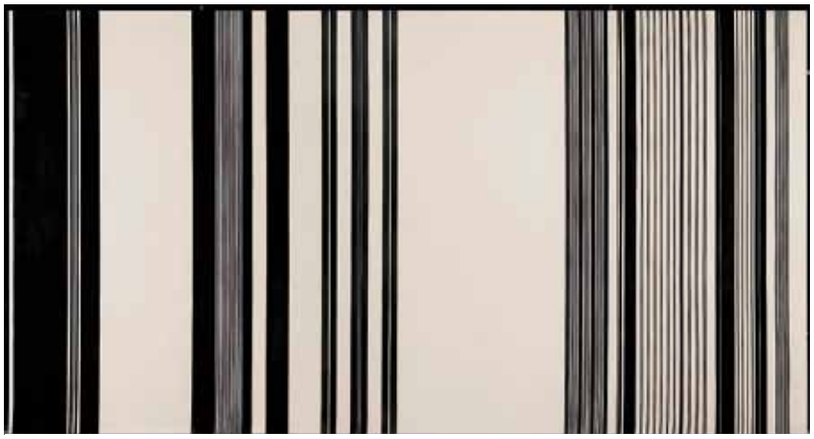
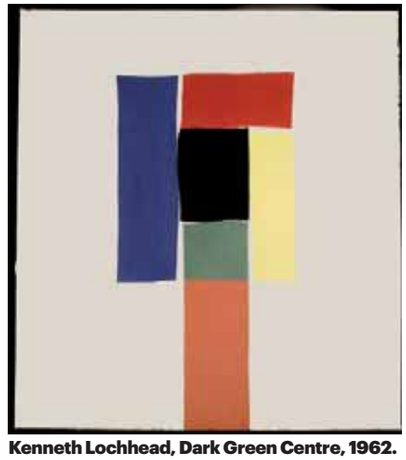


Gene Davis, Black Panther, 1970. PHOTOS: COURTESY ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

AGO takes A New Look at abstract



Kenneth Lochhead, Dark Green Centre, 1962.

EXHIBITION

Works from collection show fiery moment in art

Murray Whyte
Torstar News Service

At the Art Gallery of Ontario, you can experience the closest thing to a time warp as you're likely to find.

A New Look: 1960s and '70s Abstract Painting is a clean, minimal display of late abstract painting that follows the long, straight path away from the 1950s apex of Abstract Expressionism, as cut by the day's leading abstract painting trailblazer, the critic Clement Greenberg.

Kenneth Brummel, the gallery's recently installed assistant curator of Modern art, looked to Greenberg's very own travelling exhibition for his source material.

In 1964, Greenberg, the champion of Abstract Expressionism and likely the most influential critic in the world, back when those things meant something, assembled a show of new painting called Post-Painterly Abstraction.

It served as nothing so much as his edict that painting must evolve: that the heavy, gestural AbEx era was finished and painting could only go one way: into ever more austere, reduced realms of colour and form. The show debuted at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), travelled to the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis and wound up here, at our very own AGO.

The selection of artists here, which includes Jack Bush, Kenneth Lochhead, Morris Lewis, Helen Frankenthaler, Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella, is faithful both to that show and to a specific moment: when painting fell into a race for art-world intellectual currency with reactive movements like Minimalism and Conceptualism; and Greenberg, with his monastic high-modern teachings, was on the brink of tumbling from art-world papacy into charlatanism.

These are, of course, remarkably broad strokes. But A New Look brings it all home. Each and every piece here is from the AGO's very own collection. Some have not been seen in decades; several have never been shown here at all. Together, they represent not just one of the last, big, deep breaths of the idealistic notion of purity through abstraction, but the AGO's notable presence on its front lines. The works here weren't acquired as a historical project but right at the time they were made.

One, a polygon-shaped canvas from 1966 by Stella — who, don't forget, is currently in the throes of a 50-year career retrospective at the new Whitney Museum in New York — was sold right out of David Mirvish's fledgling gallery here in Toronto. Bush, of course, was a Mirvish confederate; and Lochhead, the founder of the Emma Lake school in Saskatchewan, a Canadian post-painterly stalwart. Lochhead's piece, likely his most famous and his best, was bought out of Greenberg's original show when it landed here.

Greenberg's travelling exhibition, in hindsight, could be seen as a final, urgent effort to hang onto an art world a blink away from slipping from his grasp. A young cohort of artists like Sol LeWitt, Lawrence Weiner and Dan Graham, fuelled by a social conscious and the radical politics of the day, were eager to bury Greenberg's monastic formalism and dance on its grave.

In the midst of this, Greenberg stood up to be counted one last time, making his argument as loudly and as clearly as he could. It was his Waterloo and we followed him gamely into battle. Looking at the cool splendour of the work here, it's hard to imagine a more brilliant defeat.

A New Look: 1960s and '70s Abstract Painting continues at the Art Gallery of Ontario to March 27.

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Give up the ghost plots

THE SHOW: Ray Donovan, Season 3, Episode 3 (TMN/Showtime)
THE MOMENT: The Girl Ghost

Ray Donovan (Liev Schreiber) finds solace through self-medicating with booze. The show also stars Katie Holmes as wealthy businesswoman Paige Finney. CONTRIBUTED

Implacable "fixer" Ray Donovan (Liev Schreiber) just skipped an important family dinner, and let himself lose a fist fight. Now, in the dead of night, he sits in his teenaged daughter Bridget's bedroom, face battered, clutching a whiskey bottle, watching her sleep. She wakes.

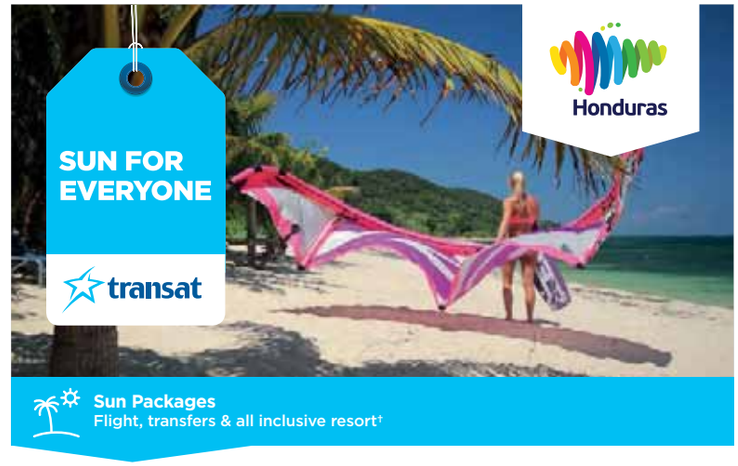
"Why didn't you come?" she asks him. He gazes past her, to a figure by her bed — another teenage girl. It's his late sister, Bridget's namesake, who committed suicide nearly 30 years earlier. She stares at him in silent rebuke. Try as he might to self-medicate with booze, he sees her ghost twice more this episode: first in his apartment, then in his car. She's always mute, mournful. She's every woman he's let down, every person he can't save.

OK, I love me my Ray Donovan, but what is it with tough guys being haunted by women ghosts? This is the third show I've seen this season that uses that device. Troubled doctor John Thackery (Clive Owen) is plagued by a dead patient on The Knick. Troubled cop Kevin Garvey (Justin Theroux) is hounded near to suicide by a dead nemesis, Patti (Ann Dowd), on The Leftovers. (And it's the fourth if you include the way troubled novelist Noah Solloway — Dominic West — keeps imagining killing his lover on The Affair.)

All right already, we get it: These tough customers have fragile souls.

But Patti aside (she has a full character arc), a dead woman should be more than a convenient narrative shortcut for a conscience.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.



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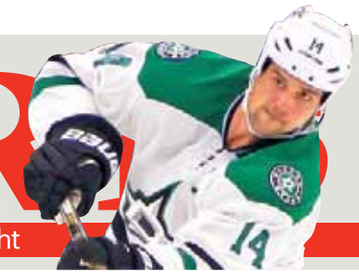


Jamie Benn scored his NHL-leading 23rd goal as the Dallas Stars beat the St. Louis Blues 3-0 on Sunday night

Promoted to the top line

WORLD JUNIORS

Perlini chosen to skate with Marner, Strome vs. Denmark

It hasn't been easy to find someone to keep up with Dylan Strome and Mitch Marner, but the speedy Brendan Perlini might be the man to bring stability to Canada's top line at the world junior hockey championship.

Perlini, the latest winger to join Canada's high-flying scoring line, practised with Marner and Strome on Sunday afternoon. The hope is that he'll help unlock the top trio's offensive potential Monday against Denmark.

"Every time you play with new players, you're always trying to find their tendencies and things like that," said Perlini after the hour-long practice at Helsinki Ice Hall. "For me, I like to play with a lot of speed so it's always trying to get guys to understand where I might like the puck or where they like it.

"I think we gelled pretty good and we'll find out in the next game."

Strome and Marner, the third and fourth overall picks in last summer's NHL draft respectively, are Canada's most skilled players at the world juniors but finding the right fit for the third member of their line has been difficult for head coach Dave Lowry.

Heading into the tournament returning veteran Lawson Crouse was on the wing with Marner, but in Saturday's 4-2 loss to the United States Crouse didn't take a single shift with Strome or Marner as Lowry opted to use John Quenneville with them instead. Later, they were joined by Anthony Beauvillier and, in the third period, Perlini.

> **I guess we'll keep switching it up. We're hitting every team with a different wave.**
>
> Dylan Strome

It seems that final matchup — with Strome centring Marner and Perlini — was the best fit as Canada prepared to face Denmark.

"He's a big body that skates well, gets in on the forecheck and he's not afraid to shoot the puck," said Lowry of the six-foot-two, 212-pound Perlini. "He gets himself into the areas to get opportunities. He was reluctant (to shoot) a couple of times last night (against the U.S.) but we've talked about it and he's made sure his mindset will be shot first."

A reluctance to shoot against the Americans was costly for Canada in a 4-2 loss on Saturday and the addition of Perlini is designed to help Strome and Marner become more selfish with the puck.

"I'm kind of a shot-first type of guy," said Perlini. "That's one thing is when I'm not shooting, to me, I'm not really playing my game.

"Just got to try and focus on shooting and going to the net."

Perlini's big body and shoot-first mentality suit his new linemates well.

"(Perlini) fits in really well," said Marner. "He's a fast-moving guy, he's a big guy, he's really good with the puck, that's what I've noticed the past couple of years playing against him.

"He complements us really well." THE CANADIAN PRESS

HIGH SCORERS

Marner is third in OHL points with 22 goals and 36 assists for the London Knights, Strome is fifth in the league with 16 goals and 37 assists for the Erie Otters and Perlini has 13 goals and nine assists with the Niagara IceDogs.

Canada's Brendan Perlini gets slammed to the ice by Louie Belpedio of the United States in Helsinki, Finland, on Saturday. The U.S. won 4-2. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

WJC NOTES

Swiss player suspended for hit on Leafs prospect

Swiss forward Chris Egli was suspended for three games by the International Ice Hockey Federation on Sunday for his hit on Swedish star William Nylander.

Egli will miss the rest of Switzerland's preliminary-round games at the tournament but will be available for the playoffs should his team advance.

Nylander, who was selected eighth overall by the Maple Leafs at the 2014 NHL draft, received an open-ice hit from Egli in the first period of Sweden's 8-3 rout of Switzerland on Saturday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Denmark preps for Canada with win over Switzerland

Mathias From scored the winner and Thomas Lillie made 22 saves as Denmark upset Switzerland 2-1 Sunday.

Soeren Nielsen also scored for Denmark (1-0-0), which faces Canada on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Slovakia opens tourney with win over Belarus

Lukas Hrusik broke a tie 19 seconds into the third period and Slovakia beat Belarus 4-2 on Sunday in its first round-robin game in the world junior hockey championship.

Belarus was coming off a 6-0 loss to Finland on Saturday in its Group B opener. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AWARDS

Price named CP's male athlete of 2015

Carey Price is Canada's male athlete of the year.

The Montreal Canadiens goaltender won the Lionel Conacher Award in a landslide.

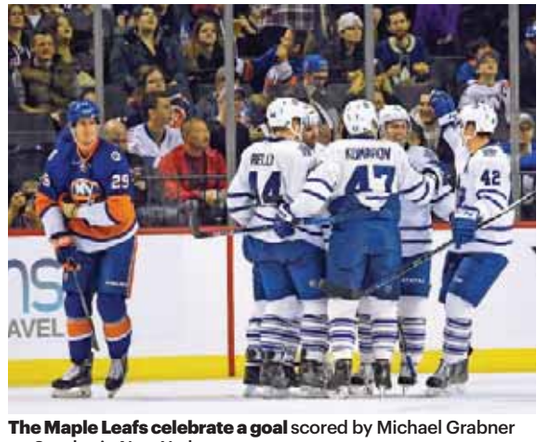
The 28-year-old took 53 per cent of the vote in a Canadian Press poll of sports editors and broadcasters across the country.

Sprinter Andre de Grasse was second with 28 per cent.

Price had a dominant season in goal. He led the National Hockey League in goals-against average and save percentage while leading Montreal to second place overall.

He won the Hart Trophy as the league's most valuable player and the Vezina Trophy as top goaltender as well as two other NHL awards. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Carey Price THE CANADIAN PRESS



The Maple Leafs celebrate a goal scored by Michael Grabner on Sunday in New York. KATHY KMONICEK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Leafs buoyed by win over Islanders

Tyler Bozak and Michael Grabner scored 1:40 apart in the second period to lead the Toronto Maple Leafs to a 3-1 victory over the New York Islanders on Sunday night.

After going 1-7-2 in October, the Leafs are 12-7-5 in November and December. Toronto has recorded at least one point in seven of its last eight games (5-1-2). Overall, the Leafs are 13-14-7.

Jonathan Bernier stopped 25 of 26 shots while James van Riemsdyk added an empty-net goal.

Thomas Greiss made 35 saves and Nikolay Kulemin for New York, which has lost four of five. The Islanders fell to 19-12-5. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SUNDAY In New York

3	1
LEAFS	ISLANDERS

ALLEGATIONS

Peyton denies Al Jazeera report

Peyton Manning said a report by Al Jazeera that aired Sunday suggesting he used performance-enhancing drugs is "completely fabricated, complete trash, garbage."

Manning angrily denied allegations to ESPN on Sunday he used human growth hormones (HGH) in 2011 when he missed an entire season while recovering from surgery. He denied ever using PEDs and blasted the report for suggesting he got drugs that were shipped to his wife, Ashley.

> **"I've done it the hard way. And to insinuate anything otherwise is a complete and total joke.**
>
> Peyton Manning

"I can't speak for any other athlete. I know what I've done, I know how hard I've worked in my 18 years of playing in the NFL. There are no shortcuts in the NFL. I've done it the long way, I've done it the hard way. And to insinuate anything otherwise is a complete and total joke. It's defamation and it really ticks me off," Manning told ESPN.

The Broncos and Colts also issued statements Sunday morning in support of Manning. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Perfection out of reach for Panthers

NFL

With history two wins away, Newton comes up short in ATL

For the first time this season, there was no big comeback for Carolina. No clutch play at a key moment. No costly mistake by its opponent in the last few minutes.

The perfect start is over for Cam Newton and the Panthers.

After Julio Jones' spectacular 70-yard touchdown reception in the third quarter gave Atlanta the lead, the Panthers came up empty in two possessions in the final three minutes as the Falcons held on for a 20-13 victory on Sunday.

Carolina (14-1) got the ball for the last time with 90 seconds left and no timeouts remaining. Newton completed a 19-yard pass to Corey Brown on first down but fumbled when stripped by Vic Beasley Jr. on the following play. Adrian Clayborn recovered for the Falcons, wrapping up the win.

It was Carolina's first regular-season loss since Nov. 30, 2014, at Minnesota. The Panthers did not get into the end zone after their opening drive.

"That's unacceptable, particularly at this time of the year," Newton said.

Newton said coach Ron Rivera told the team it played as if it was waiting for a turnaround that never came.

Newton, the Panthers' MVP candidate with the Superman celebration pose, was just OK. He threw for 142 yards and was held without a touchdown pass for only the second time this season. He ran for 46 yards, including an eight-yard scoring run on the Panthers' opening drive.

After that, Carolina's only points came on two second-half field goals from Graham Gano.

Carolina's 13 points set a season low. The Panthers had scored at least 24 points in 13 straight games.

"We're 14-1 now," Newton said. "We put ourselves in a situation that we can use this as fuel to the fire."

The Falcons (8-7) spoiled the Panthers' bid for a perfect season only two weeks after being humbled in a 38-0 loss at Carolina.

"I viewed this game as a measuring stick for us," Atlanta coach Dan Quinn said. "I wanted to see how our team would respond after the game up there."

Matt Ryan threw for 306 yards and one touchdown for the Falcons. Devonta Freeman ran for 73 yards and a TD. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cam Newton reaches for a first down against the Falcons on Sunday afternoon in Atlanta.
SCOTT CUNNINGHAM/GETTY IMAGES

SUNDAY In Atlanta

FALCONS	PANTHERS
20	13

ELSEWHERE

Jets 26, Patriots 20 (OT)
Eric Decker's six-yard touchdown catch on the first drive of overtime — after New England chose to kick off — lifted the Jets into position to make the playoffs.

A win next week at Buffalo gives the Jets a wild-card berth.

Rams 23, Seahawks 17
Todd Gurley scored on a two-yard TD run with 10:34 left, and Akeem Ayers returned a fumble 45 yards for a touchdown in the first quarter as St Louis ended Seattle's five-game winning streak.

St. Louis swept the season series from the Seahawks, having won 34-31 in overtime in Week 1. The Rams flustered quarterback Russell Wilson.

Cardinals 38, Packers 8
Arizona sacked Aaron Rodgers eight times and returned two of his fumbles for touchdowns to clinch a first-round playoff bye.

Carson Palmer threw for 257 yards and two touchdowns for Arizona. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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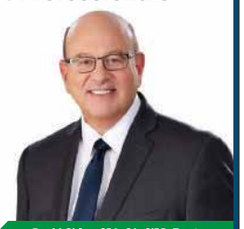
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Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

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Ready in
Prep time: 15 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 4 cups (950 ml) low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) chopped asparagus
- 2 Tbsps (30 ml) unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) chopped onion
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) fresh grated parmesan cheese, extra for garnish
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions
1. In a large pot, place butter, asparagus and onion. Sauté until vegetables are soft but crisp.
2. Add broth and bring to a simmer, cook for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, beat eggs and add parmesan cheese. Then drizzle eggs into broth.
Lightly stir until eggs are cooked. Lower heat and allow to cook another 5 minutes.
4. Ladle into bowls, sprinkle top with parmesan and serve.

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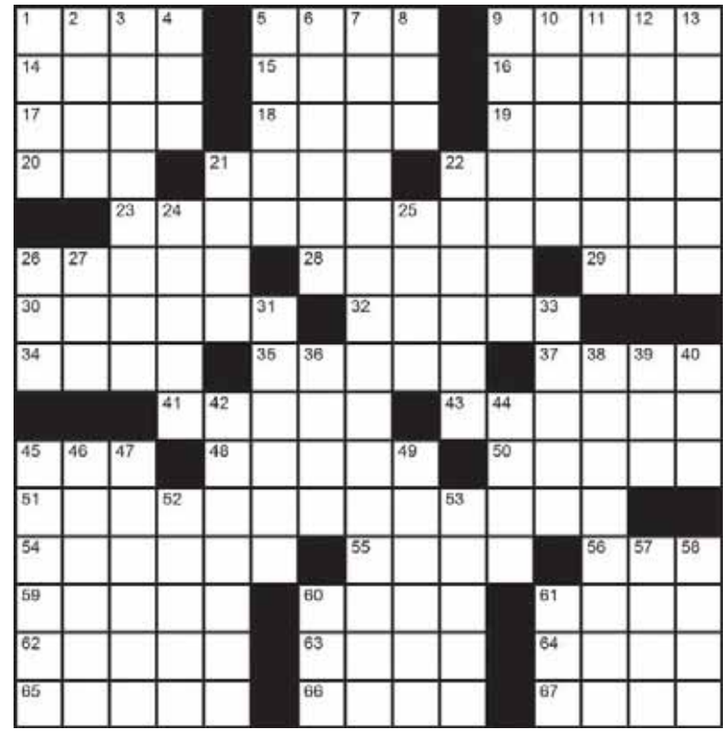
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Food Network celebrity
5. Mini message
9. Hocus-__ (Magic)
14. Fine-tune
15. Canadian filmmaker Mr. Reitman
16. Separately
17. Auto race, __ 500
18. Design style, with Art
19. Big
20. Movie special effects, commonly
21. Dropped
22. Rosemary Clooney's actor husband, Jose __
23. The Great Bear, in the night sky
26. Rope -_-__ (Muhammad Ali boxing technique)
28. Garden dweller
29. Nav. rank
30. Ms. Midler's
32. Partitioned
34. Against
35. "Push" band from Vancouver
37. Wood sorrels
41. Island of Greece
43. Six-headed mythological sea monster
45. MLB official
48. Courtroom excuse
50. Intoxicating
51. Shaw Media, to Global News: 2 wds.
54. Practical jokes
55. Mr. Disney
56. Central
59. Vocally drop a sound/syllable from a word, as per Rockin' instead of Rocking
60. Huge, hip-style
61. __-Coburg-Gotha (Former royal house)
62. Stands
63. Sir Guinness
64. Pet Shop Boys hit: "It's _ __"
65. Hagar the Horrible's comical dog
66. Besides that
67. Approve

DOWN
1. Swanky
2. __ Kong
3. Hit for Kid Creole & The Coconuts that goes "Why can't you be like..."
4. Tina of ha-has
5. King with a golden touch
6. Happenings
7. Prime Minister of Canada from 1894 to 1896: 2 wds.
8. Lennon's love
9. Brewery creation: 2 wds.
10. '60s abstractionism: 2 wds.
11. "Sex and the City" character
12. Be encouraging: 2 wds.
13. Ship ends
21. Snick-or-__
22. Prehistoric tool materials
24. Fibre-__ cable
25. Vientiane is its capital
26. Camel hair garment
27. "Dragons' __"
31. Extracts metal from ore
33. Respected group member
36. Ear-related
38. Spa facial treatment for drawing out impurities: 2 wds.
39. Municipal council member, e.g.
40. For example...
42. Most unpleasant in smell
44. Talk
45. Top teeth
46. Fish in 1952 Ernest Hemingway novel The Old Man and the Sea
47. Fatboy Slim song: "__ You"
49. Pictures
52. Bitter-__ (Diehard)
53. Position
57. Corn lily
58. Say it's nay
60. Ms. West
61. City of Brazil, with Paulo

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You don't have to do anything special or go anywhere new to get what you need — those things will find you if you stay put. Let others run around and tire themselves while you relax.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Have the courage to follow your dreams. If you reach for the sky you will achieve something truly amazing. It's time to get over your self-doubt and shine like a star again.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Things will get even better when Mercury, your ruler, changes signs towards the end of the week. Social activities and travel plans are under excellent stars at the moment, so get out and about and have fun.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Others say you're aiming too high, but you're determined to prove them wrong. There is nothing you like more than a challenge but don't get so competitive that you start treating friends as rivals.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Everything you do affects what happens in the future. Also, as you think today so you will be tomorrow, and how you act tomorrow will build your future prosperity.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Before you go telling everyone what they should be doing maybe you should wait a bit. Towards the end of the week you may see the situation in a very different light.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you are the kind of Libra who enjoys organizing social events and getting involved in causes you'll enjoy yourself today. Even if you're not that kind of Libra, aim to be one.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You'll go out of your way to help people in need. Are you trying to make up for things you should have done earlier in the year? It doesn't really matter. Good works are valuable no matter the motivation.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You need to get serious about money and what happens next will force you to save. But you also need to find new sources of income, so keep your eyes and ears open.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Make an effort to get your message across over the next few days, because once Mercury, planet of communication, leaves your birth sign next weekend that won't be so easy.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Allow your imagination to roam and don't reject ideas because they seem far-fetched. You have the power to make things happen but they won't just happen as if by magic. Visualize your goals then act decisively.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Others may say you're acting irrationally but so what? Most likely they are simply jealous because they are stuck in the past and don't share your ability to look ahead.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		5	1	8	3	9		
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7				9				6
9				2				3
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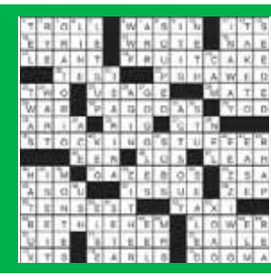

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7	2	8	3	5	1	4	6	9
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